



BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA

A PROCLAMATION

PREMATURITY AWARENESS MONTH

- WHEREAS: Roughly 1 in 10 babies are born preterm, meaning that the child was born earlier than the normal 37 to 40 weeks of pregnancy; and
- WHEREAS: Babies born preterm miss important growth and development that occurs in the final weeks of pregnancy. As a result, babies born preterm may face short-term and long-term health problems; and
- WHEREAS: Preterm birth is a leading cause of infant mortality. In 2017, approximately 14,700 babies were born prematurely in Georgia, representing 11.2 percent of all state births; and
- WHEREAS: Between 2007 and 2014, the national rate of preterm birth declined by 8 percent. Some of this decline can be attributed to successful teen pregnancy prevention initiatives, according to analysis by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC); and
- WHEREAS: The causes of preterm birth are not fully understood, as women who follow the suggestions of health care providers can still deliver early. However, some of the factors that increase the risk for preterm birth include the young or advanced age of the mother, smoking cigarettes, substance abuse, stress, depression, and carrying more than one baby. Environmental factors including poverty, lack of access to quality health care, and underemployment also correlate with preterm birth risks; and
- WHEREAS: To further reduce the incidence of preterm births, the CDC recommends preventing unintended pregnancies, achieving an ideal length of time between pregnancies, identifying women at risk for giving birth too early and offering effective treatments to prevent preterm birth, discouraging deliveries before 39 weeks without a medical need, and using a single embryo for in vitro fertilization; and
- WHEREAS: Prematurity Awareness Month provides an opportunity to recognize the struggles of the nearly 500,000 babies born preterm in the United States each year and their families. During this time, future parents, pregnant women and those who support them through their pregnancy, health care providers, public health professionals, and others are encouraged to learn more about preterm birth and take action to prevent it; and
- WHEREAS: The March of Dimes launched the Prematurity Campaign in 2003 to address premature birth rates and help families have full-term healthy babies. By 2030, the March of Dimes hopes to reduce preterm birth rates to 5.5 percent in every state, resulting in a healthier start for thousands of infants across the nation; now
- THEREFORE: I, NATHAN DEAL, Governor of the State of Georgia, do hereby proclaim November 2018 as PREMATURITY AWARENESS MONTH and November 17, 2018, as PREMATURITY AWARENESS DAY in Georgia.

In witness thereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Executive Department to be affixed this 24th day of September in the year of our Lord two thousand eighteen.



Nathan Deal

GOVERNOR

ATTEST

Chris W. Riden

CHIEF OF STAFF